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# **Portfolio of Compositions**

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**MA (Hons)**



**Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Music in Composition, by Research**

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**School of Culture and Creative Arts**

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# Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the application and development of my compositional practice, as demonstrated through my portfolio of compositions. Identifying and understanding the techniques I utilise whilst composing formed an important part of this undertaking and my development as a composer. The pieces in this portfolio demonstrate the development of my compositional practice and personal style, characterised by the importance of timbral and textural elements and the use of gesture. I intended to utilise different instrumentations to create a varied portfolio of pieces demonstrating a wide range of different timbres, sounds, and colours. In the commentary I will engage with what I have learned from my experiences over the course of this year.

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<i>The Reef</i>	for Bb clarinet, violin, viola, and violoncello
<i>Silent Key</i>	for vibraphone, marimba, and pianoforte four-hands
<i>Strangers</i>	for violin and pianoforte

# List of Accompanying Material

## Portfolio of Compositions:

<i>Cross Currents</i>	for shakuhachi, oboe, koto, and violoncello
<i>The Reef</i>	for Bb clarinet, violin, viola, and violoncello
<i>Silent Key</i>	for vibraphone, marimba, and pianoforte four-hands
<i>Untitled</i>	for violin and pianoforte

## CD containing recordings of works

1) <i>Cross Currents</i>	performed by Ensemble Okeanos
2) <i>The Reef</i>	performed by Glasgow New Music Ensemble
3) <i>Silent Key</i>	performed by Pius Cheung, Eriko Daimo, Christina Giuca Krause, and Ben Krause

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# Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor Bill Sweeny and Dr. Jane Stanley, for their continued support, advice, patience, and encouragement during this process. It has been a pleasure working with you. I'd also like to thank Jane for including me in her education project, which was an excellent opportunity and one which I hope we can further develop in the future. I'd like to thank Dr. Nick Fells for his contribution to my knowledge of the shakuhachi and Japanese music, which I put to use in *Cross Currents*. I would like to acknowledge my fellow Sound Thought committee members for their hard work, support, and good humour in putting together an extremely demanding yet ultimately successful event.

I'd like to acknowledge the performers and ensembles I have had the privilege to work with over the course of this degree: CoMA strings, Ensemble Okeanos, Glasgow New Music Expedition and the Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium guest artists. The rehearsals and performances of my works have provided me with much-valued feedback and encouragement, as well as quality recordings of my works.

I would like to recognise my friends for their support during this past year, whether it be attending performances of my works, assisting me at Sound Thought, or listening to recordings of my compositions.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their unwavering support, both emotional and financial, without which I would have been unable to undertake and see through the completion of this degree; I truly appreciate it.



# Introduction

The aim of undertaking this master's was to develop my compositional practice and technique while continuing to establish my own compositional identity. At the outset, I aimed to explore the use of timbre, instrumental colours, sounds, and extended instrumental playing techniques in tandem with pursuing developments in notation. I wanted to develop new textures and expressive effects by pushing the boundaries of notation. Additionally, I sought to expand my use of mobiles and limited aleatorism to create interesting textures.

My final undergraduate composition portfolio consisted of works which explored various extended techniques and unpitched sounds; much detail was devoted to the method of playing and the effect of the resultant sounds. The structure of these works evolved organically and freely, which was reflected in the various forms of graphical and spatial notation I employed. *Textures*, the final and highest graded work, sought to investigate the textural and timbral possibilities afforded by a ten-player mixed chamber ensemble. I utilised a form of spatial notation which gave performers some freedom and contributed to the freely-flowing character of the work. This year, I initially planned to continue developing my work with this type of music. However, I moved away from working with alternative forms of notation and returned to using much more conventional forms. This was not because I felt I had exhausted the possibilities of working with this notation, but was instead a matter of practicality. Conventional notation is far more easily read and performed when rehearsal time is limited. The other factor which influenced this move was my interest in proving I could still create works which relied less heavily on notation for their successful execution.

While composing the four pieces comprising the portfolio, I was concerned with further researching musical elements which most appealed to me. I write notated music primarily for acoustic forces; I am interested in developing my compositional style and voice whilst drawing on innovations from the past and incorporating musical ideas, elements, or sounds that intrigue me. Integral to my compositional style is an emphasis on timbre, by blending and experimenting with instrumental colour, as well as the use of gesture to provide coherence and cohesion within a piece. Some aspects of my compositional practice have changed since

the outset of this degree, which I will further examine. These decisions all contribute to my compositional style and the soundworlds which my compositions inhabit and explore.

# My Compositional Practice

## I. Timbre

I place great importance on timbre, “a term describing the tonal quality of a sound,”<sup>1</sup> as an aspect of my music. I am interested in giving detailed attention to methods of sound production by experimenting with various instrumental playing techniques and the full dynamic and registral ranges of instruments. In my works I endeavour to explore the individual timbres of every instrument, as well the relation between diverse sounds and colours. I aim to examine how these timbres can be altered or configured in different combinations with one another throughout a piece to create interesting soundworlds.

This notion of relating various instrumental timbres to one another is something which is investigated throughout the works of this portfolio. In *Cross Currents*, the juxtaposition of Japanese and Western instruments allows for a great deal of timbral exploration. For example, there is contrast between the clear, bright oboe and the breathy shakuhachi, as well as disparity between the sound of cello and koto pizzicato. However, I attempt to reconcile these contrasts to a certain extent. One example is the cello’s use of varied bow placement in order to mirror the shakuhachi’s number of playing techniques and resulting timbres. Additionally, the ensemble’s overall sound blends together when the instruments create similar timbres to overcome their differences. *The Reef* focuses on a series of largely discrete episodes in which the relationship between clarinet and strings is examined. For example, the opening consists of string harmonics and timbral techniques which gives way to sustained sonorities in which the clarinet blends with the strings. Perhaps the most emphasis placed on timbre and instrumental colour occurs in *Silent Key*, due to the piece’s instrumentation. Central to this work is the relation between the upper piano with vibraphone and the lower piano with marimba, in which the respective pairings create unique timbral blends. Figure 1 demonstrates how the sounds of bowed vibraphone and marimba interact with the piano. However, these relationships are sometimes subverted or altered at points during the piece

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell, M., “Timbre (i).” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University

to create variety. *Strangers* focuses on the dialogue between piano and violin and how they interact with one another's different soundworlds and gestures.

**B** A tempo ♩ = 60

**Figure 1. Timbral blending in *Silent Key* (b.36-39)**

As mentioned, I both fuse and juxtapose various timbres and instrumental colours in my works. The Oxford Dictionary of Music describes timbre as “that which distinguishes the quality of tone of instrument from another”.<sup>2</sup> I enjoy subverting this notion when blending multiple instrumental timbres into one sonority, sometimes on a unison pitch, to create interesting effects. Discrepancies between each instrument’s pitch, caused by any number of factors, such as pressure, embouchure, or string tension, can add further sonic interest.

<sup>2</sup> “Timbre.” *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. rev.. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press

Figure 2a. Unison timbre in *Cross Currents* (b.42-43)

Figure 2b. Unison timbre in *The Reef* (b.108-110)

“Timbre is a more complex attribute than pitch or loudness; the perception of timbre is a synthesis of several factors”.<sup>3</sup> The rich complexities of working with timbre and the variety of sounds and possibilities available is what draws me to focus on this particular musical parameter in my works.

<sup>3</sup> Campbell, M., “Timbre (i).”

## II. Gesture

Another important aspect of my compositions is the use of gesture. Gesture can be thought of as a shape, contour, or pattern that has a unique character in relation to pitch, rhythm, articulation, or timbre. I employ gestures which follow certain shapes or patterns in my pieces. They usually reappear throughout the piece, as significant audible events in order to provide structure. “Composers and improvisers structure sequences of musical events so that listeners have easy access to elements out of which musical categories can be built.” Zbikowski<sup>4</sup> touches upon how gestures are organised and repeated to allow listeners to categorise them; the shapes and contours of gesture become familiar, providing cohesion throughout a piece. “The work overall becomes an accumulation of sound events over time. The initial gestures give shape and coherence to the later gestures.”<sup>5</sup>

Gestures can be utilised to create intelligible structures, but Schoenberg warns one should avoid monotony.<sup>6</sup> He stresses that in repetition, gestures should be developed and varied to provide interest. In my works, when gestures reappear, they are varied by the context in which they are played, whether it be in a different register, texture, or contour. For example, in *Cross Currents*, the opening fan gesture is heard in different timbral contexts played by different instruments, but also has a varied contour as shown by the cello at bar 19.



Figure 3a. ‘Fan’ gesture



Figure 3b. Fan gesture, altered (b.19-20)

<sup>4</sup> Zbikowski, L.M., ‘Musical Gesture and Musical Grammar: A Cognitive Approach’, in Gritten, A. and King, E. (eds.) *New Perspectives on Music and Gesture* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2011), 83-99

<sup>5</sup> Roger Sessions Sessions, Roger, *The Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 62

<sup>6</sup> Schoenberg, A., *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* (London: Faber, 1967)

### III. Developments this year

I have had several developments in my compositional practice over the course of undertaking this master's. This year I was motivated by a drive to have my works performed and recorded; as an emerging composer it is crucial to have quality examples of your work. I found myself balancing idealistic composition goals with more practical ones. An important part of my compositional development has been in a move from writing for an 'imagined' ensemble, as in the case of my final undergraduate piece, towards writing for a specific ensemble with prescribed instrumentation. Over the past year, I have written several pieces for a specific ensemble or instrumentation: *Cross Currents* for Ensemble Okeanos, *Specks Infinitesimal* for the CoMA string orchestra, *The Reef* for Glasgow New Music Expedition, two miniature pieces for clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, as well as *Silent Key* for the OBFCS guest artists. Influenced by the practicalities of securing performances, I returned to using more traditional notation. My initial aim to develop my work with notation, as demonstrated in *Morphology* and *Textures*, was set aside. The works of this portfolio do not continue in the trajectory of these previous works, as I did not further pursue developments in graphic or spatial notation. However, the essence of these pieces, exploring timbral possibilities, has remained prevalent throughout this portfolio of compositions.

Furthermore, I had identified some issues with my approach to structure and the notion of creating a cohesive piece, which I aimed to address over the course of the year. I realised that I perhaps introduced new material too quickly or too often before I had sufficiently developed existing material. I intended to remedy this by thoroughly utilising existing material before moving on to something else and by reusing or redeveloping material rather than introducing too many new ideas. Linked to this issue was my desire to create more effective transitions between sections. I began to reuse gestures and ideas more frequently in my pieces as a way of creating coherence and structure by providing the listener with familiar material. Gestures could return later in a piece rather than occurring once or in one section only, as I had previously practised. Initially, I used repetition very sparsely, to ensure when material was repeated, it was a significant event. However, I believe that my use of repetition has increased throughout the four pieces in the portfolio.

Another development that occurred over the duration of this degree has been a shift from writing more abstract pieces towards pieces with a subtle extramusical or narrative element. Prior to this year, I was uninterested in representing anything overtly extramusical within my pieces. In fact, I was quite against the idea and preferred to write music focusing entirely on the sonic qualities of the work, with abstract titles giving little information away. However, this predilection has since changed and I now find interest in having an extramusical story or element to guide my compositional process, as opposed to thinking solely in terms of sound, as I did in earlier pieces. I appreciate the concept of having a loose idea which listeners can interpret in their own way. Ole Kühl states that “musical meaning is fluid. The same piece of music can mean different things to different people”.<sup>7</sup> This notion will be further examined throughout the commentaries.

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<sup>7</sup> Kühl, O., ‘The Semiotic Gesture’, in Gritten, A. and King, E. (eds.) *New Perspectives on Music and Gesture* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2011), 123-131



# Cross Currents

for shakuhachi, oboe, koto, and cello

c. 5'10

Ensemble Okeanos

BFE/RMA Research Students' Conference, Bangor

January 2016

*Cross Currents* was written in response to a call for scores issued by the joint British Forum for Ethnomusicology and Royal Musical Association Research Students' Conference to work with Ensemble Okeanos. The ensemble is known for its mix of Western and Japanese instruments. Writing for the prescribed instrumentation of shakuhachi, oboe, koto, and cello provided me with an interesting challenge. Having never previously written for shakuhachi or koto, I sought to learn as much about these instruments during the short timespan I had to complete the piece. I began researching the instruments themselves, as well as the traditions and performance practices of Japanese music. I also received assistance from Dr. Nick Fells, a shakuhachi player, who introduced me to the instrument and demonstrated playing technique to me. After this initial research, I felt I had enough preliminary knowledge to begin writing for shakuhachi and koto.

In *Cross Currents*, the use of gesture, harmonic language, and timbre, was informed by my research into Japanese music and instruments. I decided that while working with instruments of another culture, it was important for the piece to somehow acknowledge the Japanese music traditions I had learned about. I aspired to create some sort of synthesis of Japanese music with my own compositional idiom in order to reflect this. I engaged in writing idiomatically for the shakuhachi and koto and intended to utilise traditional gestures by incorporating them into my own compositional style whilst avoiding pastiche or cultural appropriation. This approach was also taken in my treatment of harmonic language and timbre.

There is a long history of performance practice with both shakuhachi and koto which I made an effort to engage with. I was able to employ some traditional techniques, but there are many more which would require further study to use. Some which were utilised in the piece

include the shakuhachi's breath tone, *mura-iki*, and false note, *sorane*, as well as the the koto's pitch bending, *iro*, and vibrato, *yuri*, techniques.

In terms of gesture, I sought to employ idiomatic writing for the shakuhachi and koto which could then be translated onto the Western instruments of oboe and cello. Indicative of shakuhachi playing are slides or glissandi, which can be achieved by adjusting embouchure, fingering, or a combination of the two. This was something I wanted the shakuhachi to demonstrate, but was also a gesture which translated well into the cello writing. Glissandi are present in both shakuhachi and cello throughout the piece, which creates a link and interesting relationship between the two different instruments.

Figure 4 shows a musical score for measures 45-48. The score is for four instruments: Shakuhachi (Shak.), Oboe (Ob.), Koto (Ko.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. In measure 45, the Shakuhachi part begins with a glissando marked with a slur and an upward arrow, starting on a whole note and moving up to a half note, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Oboe part is silent. The Koto part has a glissando in measure 46, marked with a slur and an upward arrow, starting on a whole note and moving up to a half note, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Violoncello part has a glissando in measure 45, marked with a slur and an upward arrow, starting on a whole note and moving up to a half note, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and the word "menacing".

Figure 4. Glissandi (b.45-48)

An archetype of both shakuhachi and koto playing is the use of grace notes. This easily translates to oboe and cello and can be heard throughout the piece.

Figure 5 shows a musical score for measures 4-6. The score is for two instruments: Shakuhachi (Shak.) and Oboe (Ob.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. In measure 4, the Shakuhachi part has a grace note marked with a slur and an upward arrow, starting on a whole note and moving up to a half note, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and the word "sorane (false note)". The Oboe part is silent. In measure 5, the Oboe part has a grace note marked with a slur and an upward arrow, starting on a whole note and moving up to a half note, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Shakuhachi part has a vibrato marking "non vibrato" over a whole note. In measure 6, the Oboe part has a vibrato marking "molto vibrato" over a whole note. The Shakuhachi part has a vibrato marking "molto vibrato" over a whole note.

Figure 5. Idiomatic writing (b.4-6)

*Cross Currents* refers to moving streams which interact with one another; this is reflected by the initial gestures, such as figure 6, being taken up by other instruments and passed around the ensemble in a constant dialogue; both within and between the instruments of the ensemble, and hopefully, between the piece itself and with traditional Japanese music.



Figure 6. Palindromic gesture

The harmonic basis of the piece stems from the Japanese pentatonic scale, which I combined with my own harmonic language to form a synthesised scaled for the piece, which the koto is tuned to. This decision to incorporate the pentatonic scale into the piece was something new for me as my previous works have largely been post-tonal with little use of or reference to a tonal harmonic language. Using the pentatonic scale gave me a basis on which to build melodies and gestures; however, I did not want the piece to sound overtly tonal or pentatonic, so I endeavoured to imprint my own style on to the piece whilst still acknowledging the traditional pentatonic scale.



Figure 7. Koto tuning

Timbre is a central aspect of *Cross Currents*. I wanted to explore each instrument's specific timbral and sound qualities and how they could be used and related to one another. I always relish investigating different sonic relationships and possibilities within an ensemble. I do so by paying close detail to each instrument's specific sonic profile and how the individual instruments can be combined with another whilst also exploring the full range of sounds they can produce. I enjoy blending similar sounds together; one particular example I found successful was at the end of the piece, where the koto plays a series of open fifths over a unison D sustained by the other instruments.

Figure 8 is a musical score for measures 62-64, illustrating a timbral blend. The score features four staves: Shakuhachi (Shak.), Oboe (Ob.), Koto (Ko.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

- Shak.:** Measure 62 starts with a note marked "imperceptible entry; non vibrato". A slur spans across measures 62 and 63.
- Ob.:** Measure 63 features a note marked "tsuki-iro".
- Ko.:** The Koto part consists of two staves. In measure 62, the upper staff has a note marked *mp*. In measure 63, the upper staff has a triplet of notes marked *p*, *pp*, and *ppp*, with the instruction "slowly fading" below. The lower staff is silent in both measures.
- Vc.:** The Violoncello part consists of two staves. A slur spans across measures 62 and 63, with a note marked *pppp* in measure 63. Above the staff, there are markings "N" and "SP" with arrows indicating a transition.

Figure 8. Timbral blend (b.62-64)

I took particular interest in having the opportunity to work with shakuhachi and koto, which I paired with the oboe and cello, respectively. A pizzicato gesture is employed by both cello and koto where both instruments play a snap pizzicato, but the differences in timbre between the two instruments are discernible.

Figure 9a is a musical score for measures 1-2, showing Koto and Violoncello pizzicato. The score features two staves: Koto and Violoncello.

- Koto:** The Koto part consists of two staves. In measure 1, the upper staff has a note marked *ff*. In measure 2, the upper staff has a note marked *mp*. In measure 3, the upper staff has a note marked *p*. The lower staff is silent in all three measures.
- Violoncello:** The Violoncello part consists of two staves. In measure 1, the lower staff has a note marked *ff*. In measure 2, the lower staff has a note marked *mp*. In measure 3, the lower staff has a note marked *p*. In measure 4, the lower staff has a note marked *pp*. The upper staff is silent in all four measures.

Figure 9a. Koto and cello pizzicato (b.1-2)

Figure 9b is a musical score for measure 10, showing Koto and Violoncello pizzicato with cello and koto. The score features two staves: Koto and Violoncello.

- Koto:** The Koto part consists of two staves. In measure 10, the upper staff has a note marked *f*. The lower staff is silent in measure 10.
- Violoncello:** The Violoncello part consists of two staves. In measure 10, the lower staff has a note marked *f*. The upper staff is silent in measure 10.

Figure 9b. Koto and cello pizzicato (b.10)

The shakuhachi has a vast number of timbres it can produce, from low mellow tones to breathy sounds. Traditional music for the shakuhachi includes the use of *mura-iki*, or a breathy air tone. The shakuhachi makes use of this technique in *Cross Currents*, and is echoed by both oboe and cello throughout. The oboist is instructed to remove the reed and blow through the instrument to imitate the *mura-iki* effect, which is then overlapped with the shakuhachi's air sound to combine the two.

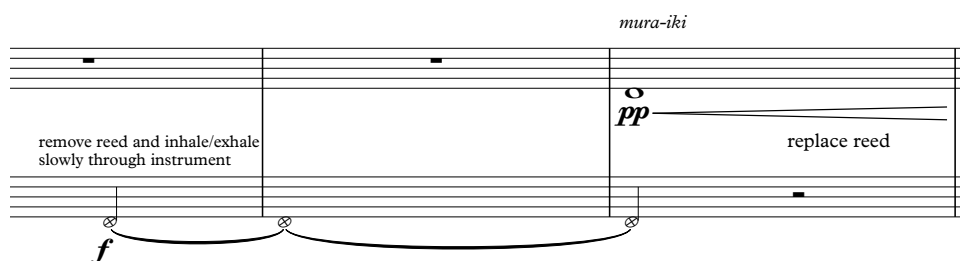


Figure 10. *Mura-iki* effect in oboe (b.38-40)

In addition, the bow placement of the cello is varied throughout in a way to recreate the number of timbral possibilities the shakuhachi has access to.

Aside from blending similar sounds together, I also enjoy contrasting sounds with one another in unexpected ways to create musical interest. For example, the opening soundworld of the piece has the smooth shakuhachi gesture almost immediately interrupted by the koto and cello snap pizzicato. This juxtaposition of two very different sounds not only sets the timbral tone of the piece, but is also like a sonic representation of the blend of the traditional Japanese elements with my own compositional style.

The workshop sessions were extremely useful in that I was able to work directly with the performers and receive feedback and advice on writing for the Japanese instruments, which I would take into consideration if I were to write for these instruments in the future.

Overall, I feel that I was successful in how I utilised the four instruments. I examined several different relationships between various combinations of the instruments. The gestures I employed were effective and I was pleased with the outcome of the timbral juxtapositions and blending which is at the core of my compositional practice. In retrospect however, I have just begun to explore the timbral possibilities afforded by both the shakuhachi and koto in *Cross Currents*. Learning about the shakuhachi from Dr. Fells and Ensemble Okeanos was an excellent experience; I would relish the opportunity to write for these instruments again with the hopes of delving deeper into both the number of beautiful sounds the instruments can produce and the rich history and traditions of Japanese music.

# The Reef

for clarinet, violin, viola, and cello

c. 10'00

Glasgow New Music Ensemble

Sound Thought 2016, Glasgow

April 2016

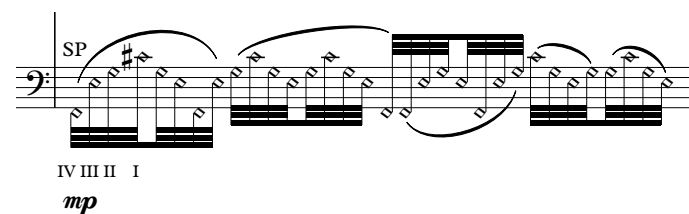
This year I was on the committee responsible for organising Sound Thought. My main motivation for taking part was to gain a performance of one of my works as part of my master's. One of my responsibilities on the committee was to secure a new music group which would take part in the festival. Glasgow New Music Expedition, an ensemble committed to performing new music by Scottish composers, was enthusiastic to partner with Sound Thought. We launched a joint call for scores for composers to submit their representative works, from which we selected four composers to write a new piece for the given instrumentation of clarinet, violin, viola, and cello. *The Reef* was one of these pieces written for performance by GNME at Sound Thought in April.

This work was shaped by my time spent at the CoMA Midwinter Composers Course in Oxford in January, which focused on writing for strings. I composed a piece for string orchestra, *Specks Infinitesimal*, which included string harmonics, extended techniques, and various ideas for strings I wished to experiment with. Having this piece workshopped and performed was a valuable experience, as I learned a great deal about the notation of harmonics, technical demands, issues of balance, and the timbral possibilities afforded by strings.

The opening of *The Reef* features harmonic and timbral techniques for the strings, guided by the knowledge I acquired from working on *Specks Infinitesimal*. This type of writing was also influenced by Kaija Saariaho's works for strings, such as *Sept Papillons*. The attention to the method of sound production, from bow placement to the amount of pressure applied to the strings was something which resonated with my own compositional thinking. I aimed to create a texture where each instrument was playing a different type of harmonic trill or tremolo that would layer upon one another and slowly evolve, with the goal of exploring the sounds of each individual instrument. I had experimented with techniques such as these with

The musical score is for a trill and glissando exercise in G major, 3/4 time. It consists of four measures. The first measure features a trill on G4 (marked *tr*) and a glissando on A4 (marked *gliss*). The second measure features a trill on G4 (marked *tr*) and a glissando on A4 (marked *gliss*). The third measure features a trill on G4 (marked *tr*) and a glissando on A4 (marked *gliss*). The fourth measure features a trill on G4 (marked *tr*) and a glissando on A4 (marked *gliss*). The score includes dynamic markings (*mf*, *mp*, *p*) and articulation (*tr*, *gliss*). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'.

Another example of this writing occurs at bar 26, where the cello plays a series of harmonics by keeping the fingers stationary on the nodes whilst moving the bow across each string, similar to bariolage.



Other important timbral moments include the second section, which features the clarinet's entry. The clarinet's upper register blends seamlessly with the string harmonics, which was particularly effective in performance. Blending the clarinet with the strings also occurs in sections B, G, and H which include more sustained passages where the ensemble's overall instrumental colour is exposed.

2 2 stillness below

17

Cl. *pp*

Vln. *ppp* *p*

Vla. 5th harmonic *ppp* *p*

Vc. *ppp* *p*

Figure 13. Clarinet entry (b.17-18)

*The Reef's* formal structure is episodic in nature. Each section has its own character, defined by distinctive gestures, harmonies, instrumentation, and rhythmic characteristics, as well as by a descriptive expression marking, which represents a visual image from the titular 'reef'. This organic evolution supports the title, which refers to the natural phenomenon of a coral reef. I sought to explore various things which occur or would be present in a reef. This piece was strongly influenced by a visual element, which is unlike the majority of my works and marks a departure from my usual working method, normally concerned with sonic affordances rather than the musical depiction of a visual image.

The piece opens quietly with sections A and B, followed by climaxes and quieter sections throughout, creating interest in the variety of tension. Section C features repeated upward climbing gestures which reach a climax (b.27-32), repeat (b.33-35), then begin again (b.36-40). Section E opens with quick interplay between viola and cello before all instruments join to play a series of descending, tumbling gestures; in effect, the opposite of the climbing gestures of section C. Each section is characterised by its own series of gestures or by how the instruments interact with one another. Although the work is largely episodic, the final section sees a return of the opening material of sustained chords and timbral string writing, this time combined. This acts as a way to indicate the piece has come full circle structurally.



As with all my compositions, instrumentation is one of the most vital aspects of *The Reef*. It provided me with a compositional starting point. I sought to examine the similarities and differences between the clarinet and strings, and how different hierarchies or relationships between the instruments could be explored throughout. Certain instruments take on more soloistic roles at times whilst at other points the instruments have more equal roles. I also wanted to feature different instrumentation throughout, from solos to full ensemble. There are two sections which feature one instrument as a soloist: section D features solo cello whilst section F features solo clarinet with the strings accompanying with continuous harmonic glissandi.

**F** gentle sea breeze

Figure 14 shows a musical score for measures 92-95. The Clarinet (Cl.) part is the soloist, playing a melodic line marked *mp*. The String parts (Vln., Vla., Vc.) provide accompaniment with continuous harmonic glissandi. The Vln. part is marked *mp* and *8va*. The Vla. part is marked *mp* and *SP*. The Vc. part is marked *mp* and *8va*. The score includes labels for the string parts: 'II harmonic glissandi' for Vln., 'SP IV harmonic glissandi' for Vla., and 'I harmonic glissandi' for Vc.

**Figure 14. Clarinet solo over continuous string harmonic glissandi (b.92-95)**

The idea of solo and accompaniment is revisited in section G where each instrument takes a turn playing a descending melodic line over sustained notes, referencing the much quicker and more chaotic lines of section E. Exploring the different relationships and hierarchies between the instruments was a crucial aspect of this piece. In essence, this was meant to represent musically the different hierarchies or food chain of animals and organisms within a coral reef. This is alluded to in each section's descriptive markings. Therefore, *The Reef* was influenced extramusically, but in a very subtle and implicit way.

In reflection, I perhaps could have made more use of the clarinet and its timbral possibilities. The strings employ a variety of playing methods and techniques in order to create a wide array of sounds; however, I feel the clarinet could have been further exploited in order to match the strings.

# Silent Key

for vibraphone, marimba, and piano four-hands

c. 8'35

Pius Cheung, Eriko Daimo, Christina Giuca Krause and Ben Krause

Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium, Oregon

July 2016

*Silent Key* was written for my attendance at the Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium. Composers were asked to submit their choice of five instrumentations from the list of available performers; I was allocated two percussionists and piano four-hands. This instrumentation appealed to me as I was eager to explore the timbral possibilities of this combination of instruments. I had previously begun sketches for a piece for two pianos. Composing for piano four-hands was similar and provided the additional challenge of avoiding part crossing, an imposed limitation. During my undergraduate degree I wrote a piece for piano, marimba and vibraphone in a post-minimalist style. I was initially tempted to take a similar approach as keyboard instruments are well suited to minimalism, but I wanted to adhere to my personal compositional style that I have been developing throughout this portfolio.

Previously, I shied away from having programme notes or including much information about the piece for the audience; however, this view changed following the performance of *The Reef*. I desired for the audience to be more engaged with the piece, as well as to convey some sort of message or theme. I aimed to so do by writing a brief programme note which would be read before the performance, to better explain the title. I decided to provide some guidance to the listener in regards to what the piece was about, rather than providing them with solely an abstract title. Additionally, I considered that this would be a way to contextualise the piece which would be beneficial for those unfamiliar with listening to new music. I did not want to force anything upon the listeners through the programme note, but instead provide my own personal justification for writing the piece, and what I felt I was communicating. The individual listener can make up their own mind but I thought that it was important to include the composer's perspective.

One of the key aspects of the piece is the instrumentation and how the instruments interact with one another, especially how the individual colours blend together. I sought to create a seamless, organic flow between gestures I utilised. For example, in the opening of the the piece, the piano plays a low D# followed by the vibraphone's entrance several octaves above with a D# roll which slowly emerges from a very quiet dynamic. The marimba then joins the vibraphone on the same pitch, further evolving the D# timbre. The piano then reiterates the D# before beginning a tumbling gesture and is joined by vibraphone and marimba in unison octaves to create the fused timbre once again. This single melodic line passes around the ensemble but continually morphs as the instruments join in and fade out.

Figure 15 is a musical score for a section titled "Cascading gesture (b.5-6)". It consists of four staves: Vibraphone (Vib.), Marimba (Mar.), Piano 1 (Pno. 1), and Piano 2 (Pno. 2). The music is in 4/4 time. The Vibraphone staff begins with a measure of rests, followed by a melodic line starting on a D# (marked with a 5) that moves up stepwise with triplets and a dynamic shift from *f* to *mp*. The Marimba staff has a measure of rests, then a D# (marked with a 5) that moves up stepwise with a dynamic shift from *f* to *pp*. Piano 1 has a measure of rests, then a D# (marked with a 5) that moves up stepwise with a dynamic shift from *f* to *p*. Piano 2 has a measure of rests, then a D# (marked with a 5) that moves up stepwise with a dynamic shift from *ff* to *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, triplets, and dynamic markings (*f*, *p*, *mp*, *pp*, *ff*). A rehearsal mark "Red." is present at the beginning of the Piano 1 and Piano 2 staves.

**Figure 15. Cascading gesture (b.5-6)**

Timbre and merging of sound are at the forefront of the piece, as the vibraphone and marimba are often treated like extensions of the piano. This is achieved by the vibraphone and marimba doubling one of the piano parts to create a fused sound. The vibraphone is paired with piano one, as its higher range blends well with the timbre of the higher register of the piano and the use of the pedal by both instruments adds further colour to the

soundworld of the piece. Conversely, the marimba doubles piano two, as its rich bass tones complement the piano's lower register.

At bar 23 the vibraphone and marimba are bowed, creating an ethereal, atmospheric soundworld which I find particularly effective. The bowed timbre of the instruments contrasts with the normal method of playing with mallets. Here, I explore the lower register of the marimba, which produces a very rich, deep, and resonant sound with many overtones. This is juxtaposed by the vibraphone, playing in a much higher register, which sounds more clean, shining, and glass-like.

In regards to timbre, resonance is an extremely important aspect of the piece. The piano and vibraphone pedals are frequently employed to capture and suspend the resonances and sonorities played throughout. The notion of space plays an important role in *Silent Key*; I wanted the audience to be able to appreciate the held sonorities after a gesture or activity has occurred before the music moves on to the next phrase. This natural space between gestures also helps provide form to the piece, which is an aspect of my compositions I had been working to improve.

Figure 16. Repeated bar (b.58-59)

I also intended to explore the large dynamic range of the instruments. There are quiet sections, as well as sections of intensity and loudness. At bar 58, the ensemble repeats a chaotic cascading gesture three times which is followed by a complete contrast of extremely quiet marimba and piano rolls in their lowest registers. Contrast exists throughout *Silent Key*, ranging from differences in dynamic to the juxtaposition of texturally dense and sparse passages.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Marimba (Mar.), Piano 1 (Pno. 1), and Piano 2 (Pno. 2). The Marimba part is in the upper staff, showing a tremolando (tr) and a pianissimo (pp) dynamic. Piano 1 and Piano 2 are in the lower staves, also showing tremolando and pianissimo markings. The score is for measures 60-61.

**Figure 17. Pianissimo tremolandi (b.60-61)**

In respect to texture, I aimed to present a number of varied and interesting ideas throughout. The relationship between the instruments is very important, as mentioned previously. They are arranged and juxtaposed in various combinations, as demonstrated by figures 16, 18, 19, and 20. Each has its own character, determined by textural density, dynamic, and rate of movement. Figure 16 demonstrates a dense heterophonic phrase, where each instrument plays a variation of a contoured cascading gesture. The unrelenting effect is reinforced through the bar being repeated three times, before tailing off.

Usually the four parts play a similar gesture, but occasionally two ideas are presented at once, in opposition. For example, at bar 46, the vibraphone and piano one melody is contrasted by the marimba and piano two playing rhythmical figures, similar to previous gestures. The large textural difference in both pitch range and rate of movement between these two different ideas highlights the contrast to greater effect. Combining previous material together in a

collage-like way such as this helps provide cohesion to the piece whilst creating new and interesting sounds.

Figure 18 is a musical score in 4/4 time, consisting of four systems. The first system shows a melody with triplets and a dynamic of *mf*, with the instruction "like an asymmetrical dance". The second system shows a piano part with a complex rhythmic pattern, marked *mp*, with the instruction "with piano 2". The third system returns to the melody with triplets, marked *mf*, with the instruction "like an asymmetrical dance". The fourth system shows a marimba part with a complex rhythmic pattern, marked *p*, with the instruction "with marimba".

Figure 18. Contrasting gestures / textural contrast (b.46-48)

Another interesting texture is realised by providing short phrases to the marimba and vibraphone which are to be continuously repeated, creating a ceaseless effect which is not physically taxing to perform. The effect is similar to figure 16, but differs in that while the marimba and vibraphone constantly replay their phrase, the piano parts add further textural interest with their respective lines.

Figure 19 is a musical score showing two systems. The first system is a vibraphone part with a repeated phrase, marked *mf*, with the instruction "repeat phrase" and "mf rhythmic". The second system is a marimba part with a repeated phrase, marked *mp*, with the instruction "repeat phrase" and "mp rhythmic".

Figure 19. Vibraphone and marimba repeated phrase (b.72-73)

Gestures play an important role. There are several which reoccur throughout the piece. In contrast to *The Reef*, with its clearly defined sections, I intended for *Silent Key* to be more free, with musical ideas returning and being reused. New material is usually followed or preceded by something that has already occurred. One gesture which is heard three times throughout the piece and acts as a structural signifier is the chime-like figure shown in figure 20. In its first instance, the parts play in rhythmic unison, but as the gesture reappears, it is played in a more antiphonal, ritualistic manner. This phrase is texturally dense with a wide pitch range where all instruments play different rhythms and sonorities.

The musical score for Figure 20, titled 'Chime gesture (b.54-56)', is written in 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of musical notation. The first system, labeled 'ritualistic with marimba', shows a single staff with a triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4) marked 'mp' and a triplet of eighth notes (B3, A3, G3) marked 'p'. The second system, labeled 'ritualistic with vibraphone', shows two staves; the top staff has a triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4) marked 'mp' and a triplet of eighth notes (B3, A3, G3) marked 'p', while the bottom staff is empty. The third system, labeled 'ritualistic', shows two staves; the top staff has a triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4) marked 'mp' and a triplet of eighth notes (B3, A3, G3) marked 'p', while the bottom staff has a triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4) marked 'pp' and a triplet of eighth notes (B3, A3, G3) marked 'ppp'. The fourth system, also labeled 'ritualistic', shows two staves; the top staff has a triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4) marked 'mp' and a triplet of eighth notes (B3, A3, G3) marked 'p', while the bottom staff has a triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4) marked 'pp' and a triplet of eighth notes (B3, A3, G3) marked 'ppp'.

Figure 20. Chime gesture (b.54-56)

Another example is an ensemble gesture that quickly moves upwards in pitch which occurs repeatedly throughout the piece and acts as musical punctuation to denote the end of a section or passage. Its occurrences are varied in dynamic and range.

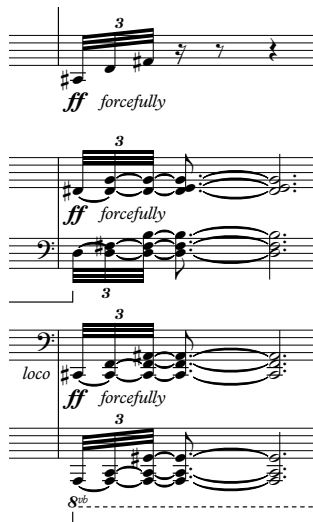


Figure 21a. Upward gesture, *ff* (b.14)



Figure 21b. Upward gesture, *pp* (b.15)

The piece was revised slightly from its original version to facilitate easier performance after receiving feedback from the performers and hearing the piece performed. One section which changed significantly was bars 23-28, which features bowed percussion. The marimba part originally consisted of the left hand bowing while the right hand is playing rolls. However, I learned that this was impractical due to the difficulty of producing a long and even tone on the lower register by bowing, as well as the physical demands imposed by the nature and size of the instrument. This section was also changed to be freely interpreted by performers, rather than being restricted by notated rhythms. The pitches were given in order and the percussionists coordinated with one another to play them in their own time.

Additional comments from the marimbist suggested I could further blend the marimba's timbre with the other pedalled instruments by instructing the percussionist to use softer mallets or to make more use of rolls rather than singly-notated notes, which would prevent the marimba from being too prominent in some of the textures.



I was pleased with the outcome of the piece; everything came across well in performance, aside from some timing and balance issues. I learned much about writing for marimba and vibraphone and would be eager to write for this instrumentation in the future and explore further timbral possibilities.

# Strangers

for violin and piano

c. 7'00

For the final composition in my portfolio, I aspired to challenge myself by writing for smaller forces. This would compel me to focus on the relationship between only two instruments without relying on the possibilities afforded by larger forces. I sought to demonstrate my progress over the past year by focusing on improving shortcomings identified in my previous pieces, mostly in respect to structure, transitions between sections, and development of material.

One overriding aspect of pieces written this year has been practicality in terms of performance. My works have been written in response to call for scores which had a high probability of receiving a performance. For this final piece, I did not have a performance secured so I decided to write a duo for two widely available instruments, violin and piano, with the aim of eventually securing a performance.

The discrepancy between notation and resulting sound is something which I grappled with throughout the year. In *Strangers*, I wanted to avoid unnecessary difficulty for the performers whilst still communicating effects I wished to achieve. In particular, I focused on using a limited number of discrete gestures and material which would be revisited and developed throughout the piece. This provides structure whilst also providing musical cohesion overall by providing familiar themes for the listener.

The title of *Strangers* refers to the end of a friendship experienced by the composer. The piece was written as a means of coming to terms with losing a friend and moving on, and accepting that it's over. I decided to include an extramusical element in this piece as I thought including it in the previous piece, *Silent Key*, was effective and helpful to the audience.

The piece is based upon musical ideas laid out in the opening section, which are later revisited and developed.



Figure 22. Opening motif (b.1-2)

Additionally, gesture plays an important role in this piece, with three different archetypes utilised as thematic elements which should become familiar to the listener: a rippling gesture, a tumbling gesture, and a cascading gesture.



Figure 23. Ripple gesture (b.17-19)

A significant aspect of this piece is the relationship between violin and piano. This intimate instrumentation contrasts with the previous pieces in the portfolio, which were all written for four instruments. I wanted to create a tangible sense of dialogue between the two parts. Figure 24 demonstrates the violin's arrhythmic interjections during the piano's tumbling gesture.

4

Figure 24. Tumbling gesture (b.42-43)

Throughout the piece, the relationship between the violin and piano changes between playing similar gestures, creating a more unified texture, to playing contrasting material. The second iteration of the tumbling gesture at bar 56 has the violin play sustained, static harmonics in opposition to the piano's flurry of descending notes.

The image shows a musical score for measures 56-58. The Violin (Vln.) part is in the upper staff, featuring sustained, static harmonics. The Piano (Pno.) part is in the lower staff, featuring a flurry of descending notes. The piano part includes various fingerings (7, 6, 3, 5, 3) and articulations (loco, 8). The measures are numbered 56, 57, and 58.

**Figure 25. Tumbling gesture (b.56-58)**

The initial motives connect the opening of the piece with later sections on an internal level; when they reappear they are developed and layered with additional gestures to create more complex textures. Each section in *Strangers* is based on one of the opening motifs, with the repetition of these gestures providing familiarity and overall structural coherence. The motif in Figure 22 forms the basis for section A and is again heard at E and F; it is also played in both the opening and closing sections of the piece.

## Reflections and Conclusions

I have learned a great deal about composition by writing and analysing these four works. I have discovered much about my own practice and have developed new working methods that have enabled me to make great progress as a composer. One instance of this was through my participation in a composition education project as part of my master's with my supervisor, Dr Jane Stanley. We provided group and one-on-one tuition to high school students from Glasgow secondary schools on a regular basis over a period of approximately three months, with the aim of providing them with a range of compositional techniques whilst also exposing them to relevant repertoire. Working on this project has been an invaluable experience, as I have been able to develop skills and knowledge as a teacher of composition. Importantly, I have learned a great deal about my own compositional practice through presenting and explaining my music to the pupils.

Over the course of undertaking this degree, I strove to expand my knowledge of music and to develop my compositional practice as much as possible. I had the opportunity to conduct Ensemble Okeanos's premiere of *Cross Currents* and develop my rehearsal skills through working with the CoMA string orchestra, Ensemble Okeanos, Glasgow New Music Ensemble, and with the guest artists in Oregon. I have also developed my 'networking' abilities, through interacting with fellow composers at various conferences, festivals, and symposia throughout the UK and further afield, whilst also establishing important relationships with performers and ensembles.

I have had many excellent experiences and learned a great deal this year but there are still aspects of compositions I wish to engage with. I would relish the opportunity to learn more about the music of other cultures; this desire was awakened from my brief time studying Japanese music and working with Ensemble Okeanos, as well as from learning about and performing in a Javanese gamelan ensemble while at the Composers Symposium at the University of Oregon. I would be keen to further pursue this, as well as to continue developing my use of gesture and the treatment of timbre in my works. Through working on this

portfolio, I've learned much about my own music and who I am as a composer. I have established a deeper confidence in my compositional abilities, and in turn, myself.

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# Cross Currents

for shakuhachi, oboe, koto, and violoncello

Ensemble Okeanos

RMA/BFE Research Students' Conference 2016

Kevin Leomo

2015

# Performance Notes

The score is notated at concert pitch

Duration approximately 5'10"

## General

NV – non vibrato

MV – molto vibrato

🍷 Bartok/snap pizzicato

## Shakuhachi

*mura-iki*: air note

✂ sorane: false note

## Oboe

○ harmonic

## Koto

tuning:



*yuri*: LH vibrato

*hiki-iro*: pull string to lower pitch

*tsuki-iro*: press string to raise pitch

mute: place LH finger on string where it touches bridge

harmonic: place finger on node to produce pitch sounding one octave higher

+ LH pizzicato

## Cello



distortion: increase bow pressure where pitched tone is replaced by unpitched sound

ST – sul tasto

SP – sul ponticello

N – normal bow position

to Okeanos Ensemble  
**Cross Currents**  
for shakuhachi, oboe, koto and cello

Kevin Leomo  
2015

Spacious ♩ = 52

Shakuhachi

Oboe

Koto

Violoncello

Shak.

Ob.

Ko.

Vc.

8

Shak. *non vibrato* *molto vibrato* *mura-iki (air note)*

Ob. *f* *f* *ff*

Ko. *mp* *f* *yuri (LH vibrato)* *with cello* *f*

Vc. *pp* *f* *with koto*

11

Shak. *slow down* *trill* **A**

Ob.

Ko. *f* *5* *mp* *3* *f* *3* *mp*

Vc. *SP* *N* *fp* *f*

15

Shak. *pp* *p* *trill*

Ob. *p* *pp*

Ko. *f* *p*

Vc. *ST* *SP* *N* *pp* *f* *pp*

19 **B**

Shak.

Ob.

Ko. *mp* 3 *f* 5 *yuri* *mp*

Vc. *sawing* *f* *p* III SP *pp*

23

Shak.

Ob.

Ko. *p*

Vc. *mp* *f* pizz.

27

Shak.

Ob.

Ko. *f* 3 *mp* 3 *f* *p* *f* 3 *mp*

Vc. *l.v.* *f* *mp* 3 5



30 C *mura-iki*

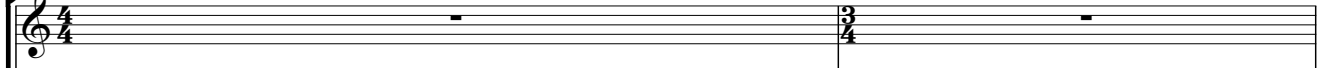
Shak. 

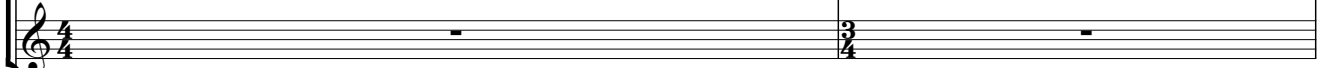
Ob. 


Ko. 

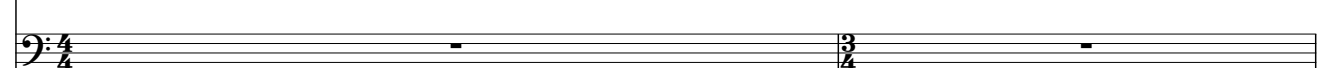
Vc. 

34

Shak. 

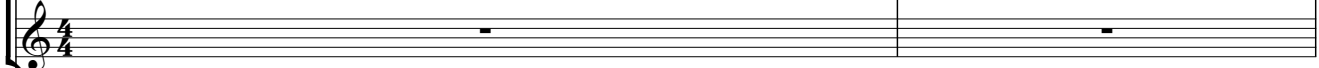
Ob. 

Ko. 

Vc. 

36

Shak. 

Ob. 

Ko. 

Vc. 

38 **D**

Shak. *mura-iki*

Ob. remove reed and inhale/exhale slowly through instrument *f* replace reed *pp*

Ko.

Vc. SP III *f* II *mp* I *f* 'seagull' effect

42 **E**

Shak. NV *ppp*

Ob. NV *pp*

Ko. *p* *f* *pp*

Vc. ST, NV III *pp*

45

Shak. *f*

Ob.

Ko. *f* *p*

Vc. menacing *f*

49

Shak. *f*

Ob. *mf* measured; steady

Ko. *f*

Vc. *f* measured; steady

51

Shak. *f* 3

Ob. *f* 3

Ko. *yuri* 3

Vc. *p* *f*

54

Shak. 5

Ob. *pp* *non vibrato*

Ko. *p* *f* *yuri*

Vc. *p* *f* *pp* *ST, non vibrato*

58

Shak.

Ob.

Ko.

Vc.

*hiki-iro*

*yuri*

*imperceptible entry; non vibrato*

*p*

*f*

*yuri*

ST

*p*

*pppp*

*p*

62

Shak.

Ob.

Ko.

Vc.

*imperceptible entry; non vibrato*

*tsuki-iro*

*mp*

*p*

*pp*

*ppp*

*pppp*

*slowly fading*

*mute*

*+*

N

SP

*pppp*



# The Reef

for Bb clarinet, violin, viola, and violoncello

Glasgow New Music Expedition  
Sound Thought 2016

Kevin Leomo

2016

# Performance Notes

The score is notated at concert pitch

Duration approximately 10'00"

- tremolo should always be as dense as possible
- arrows indicate a gradual change in playing method
- glissandi start from the beginning of note values
  
- harmonics (half pressure) are indicated by diamond noteheads at playing position
- natural/open harmonics whose sounding pitch is the same as the stopped pitch are indicated by a small circle above the notehead
- pressure trill: alternate finger pressure between normal and light, resulting in alteration between normal and harmonic sound

to GNME, Sound Thought 2016

# The Reef

for clarinet, violin, viola and cello

Kevin Leomo  
2016

Spacious ♩ = 66

**A** beneath the azure surface

B♭ Clarinet

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

*sul ponticello*

*pp* *mp* *f* *pp*

*tr*

6

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*p* *f* *mp* *mf* *pp*

*tr*

III (pressure trill)

trill during gliss

11

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*mf* *mp* *p*

*tr*

trill during gliss

SP

I

II ST

III (pressure trill)

increase then decrease speed



2

**B** stillness below

Cl. *pp* *pp* *p* *pp*

Vln. *ppp* *p* *mp* SP

Vla. 5th harmonic *ppp* *p* *mp* SP

Vc. *ppp* *p* *mp* SP

→ N

I

III

Cl. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

Vln. *mp*

Vla. I II *mp*

Vc. I SP *mp*

IV III II I

**C** emerging

Cl.

Vln. SP *mp* light; detached

Vla. SP *mp* light; detached

Vc. SP *mp* light; detached

29

Cl. *mp*

Vln.

Vla. *f* 6 6

Vc. *f* 7 7

30

Cl.

Vln. *f* 6 normale 3

Vla. 5 normale 3

Vc. normale 6 5 3 3

32

Cl. *triumphantly* *ff* *mp* *fff*

Vln. *mf* *pp* *f*

Vla. *mf* *pp* *f*

Vc. *mf* *f*

35

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*mp*

*f*

5

6

7

37

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*mp*

*p*

*mp*

*fff*

5

6

7

5

7

38

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*fff*

*ff*

*ff*

*f*

*ff*

*mp*

*ff*

6

7

7

5

6

7

5

6

7

40

Cl. *f intensely* *mp*

Vln. *f intensely* *mp*

Vla. *f intensely* *mp*

Vc. *f intensely* *mp*

44

Cl. *f subito* *mp*

Vln. *f subito* *mp*

Vla. *f subito* *mp*

Vc. *f subito*

48

Cl. *p* *ppp*

Vln. *p* *ppp*

Vla. *p* *ppp*

Vc. *fp*

*moving gracefully*

*sing out*

SP → N

6

52

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

3

ST

N

3

3

*p*

57

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

5

SP

N

5

*mp*

*mp*

*mf*

62

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

3

*mp*

*pp*

**E** quick currents

68

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

SP

*mp*

70

Cl.

Vln.

Vla. *SP*  
*mp*

Vc.

72

Cl.

Vln.

Vla. *SP*  
*mp*

Vc.

74

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

76

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*mf* 3

*mp* 3

*mf* 3

*mf* 5

78

Cl. *frenzied* 5 6

Vln. *frenzied* 6 5 7 5

Vla. *frenzied* 5 6 3 6 *f*

Vc. *frenzied* 6 7 *f*

79

Cl. 7 *f* 6 7

Vln. 7 *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. 5 7 6 7

80

Cl. *mf* 3 *f* *ff* 3 7 5

Vln. 3 5

Vla. *p* 3 *mp* 3 3 3 *mf*

Vc. 6 7 7

82

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*f*

83

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*mp*

*f*

*ff*

84

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*calmly*



10

87

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*p*

**F** gentle sea breeze

92

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*mp*

8va

SP IV harmonic glissandi

II harmonic glissandi

SP

SP

I harmonic glissandi

96

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

3

100

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

slightly slower ♩ = 50

104

playfully

f

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

106

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

108

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*like a sustained echo*

**G** A tempo ♩ = 66  
beneath the waves

112

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*mf*

*mp*

*p*

*f*

*ppp*

*mp*

*mp*

116

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*p*

*mp*

*p*

*f*

*f*

*mp*

120

Cl. *mp* *ff*

Vln. *p* *f*

Vla. *p* *f*

Vc. *p* *f*

123

Cl. *p* *pp*

Vln. *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

**H** calm in the deep

126

Cl. *pp* *pp* *p*

Vln. *ppp* *p* *SP*

Vla. *ppp* *p* *SP*

Vc. *ppp* *p* *SP*

5th harmonic

131

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

III *mp*

IV *mf*

ST

*pp*

ST

*pp*

ST

*pp*

135

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*p* *f*

*mp* *f*

*mp* *f*

*mp* *f*

N

N

N

138

Cl.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

SP

SP

SP





# Silent Key

for vibraphone, marimba, and piano four-hands

OBFCS Guest Artists,  
Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium 2016

Kevin Leomo

2016



# Program Notes

'Silent key' is a term used by amateur radio operators which refers to a member of their community who has passed away.

Radio operators use Morse code to communicate with one another; 'key' refers to the telegraph key used to transmit the code. 'Silent' refers to the Morse code signal 'SK', which signifies 'end transmission'.

I was struck by the wordplay of this concept; that this community has such a poetic phrase for deceased colleagues and friends. On a personal level, silent key to me means that although a person may be gone, they still remain silently in our memories.

# Performance Notes

The score is notated at concert pitch  
Duration approximately 8'30"

- at bar 31, the tempo is 'very freely' to allow the percussionists the time they need to bow and produce the sounds of the indicated pitches
- arco: vibraphonist requires two bows, marimbist requires one bow
- repetition (vibraphone and marimba) – repeat phrase until indicated
- to aid coordination, vibraphonist and first piano player should be able to see one another; as should marimbist and second piano player

for the Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium

# Silent Key

for vibraphone, marimba and piano four-hands

Kevin Leomo  
2016

Freely; relaxed ♩ = 60

Vibraphone

Marimba

Piano 1

Piano 2

*pppp* *pp* *mp*

*ppp* *p*

*mp*

gradually release pedal

5

Vib.

Mar.

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

with piano

*f* *p* *f* *mp*

*f* *pp*

*f* *p*

*ff* *p*

7

9

11 *with piano*

Vib. *ff* *measured; steady*

Mar.

Pno. 1 *mp* *measured; steady*

Pno. 2 *ff*

3

12

Vib. *mp* *f* *ppp*

Mar. *mp* *f* *ff* *forcefully*

Pno. 1 *mp* *f* *ff* *forcefully*

Pno. 2 *mp* *f* *ff* *forcefully* *loco*

3

8<sup>vb</sup>

4

15

*mysteriously*

**A**

Vib.

*mp* *ppp* *3 mp* *f* *mf*

Mar.

*pp* *mysteriously* *3* *mp*

Pno. 1

*pp* *mysteriously* *p* *mp* *f* *loco*

Ped.

Pno. 2

*pp* *mysteriously* *3* *loco* *Ped.*

19

Vib.

*mp* *p*

Mar.

*p* *pp*

Pno. 1

*mp* *3 ppp* *p* *6 f*

Ped.

Pno. 2

*p* *pp* *p* *6 f*

22

Vib. *f* wildly

Mar.

Pno. 1 *ff* wildly

Pno. 2 *ff* wildly

23

Vib.

mp

5

3

p

Mar.

mp

3

pp

Pno. 1

5

3

p

Pno. 2

3

p

pp

25

Vib. *with piano* *like a distant chime* *to bows*

*f* *mf* *mp* *p*

Mar. pick up bow with LH

Pno. 1 *with vibraphone* *like a distant chime*

*mf* *mp* *p* *pp*

Pno. 2

very freely

31

Vib. *arco* *mp*

Mar. *arco* *mf*

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

**B** A tempo ♩ = 60

**7**

Vib. *pp* *p* *mf* to mallets

Mar.

Pno. 1 *pp* *p* *mp* *Bb*

Pno. 2 *p* *mp* *p*

Vib. 40 with piano 1 **C** *p* *mp* *f* *mp*

Mar. to mallets

Pno. 1 with vibraphone *pp* *p* *mf* *p*

Pno. 2 *pp*



8

45

Vib. *mf* like an asymmetrical dance

Mar. *p* *mp* with piano 2

Pno. 1 *mf* like an asymmetrical dance

Pno. 2 *pp* *p* with marimba

48

Vib.

Mar.

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

50 9

Vib. *mp*

Mar.

Pno. 1 *p*

Pno. 2

53 D

Vib. *f* *ritualistic with marimba* *mp* *p*

Mar. *ritualistic with vibraphone* *mp* *p* *pp*

Pno. 1 *f* *ritualistic* *mp* *p* *pp*

Pno. 2 *ritualistic* *mp* *p* *pp*

56 repeat 3x

Vib. *pp* *ff* unrelenting 5 5 6

Mar. *ppp* *pp* *ff* unrelenting 5 5 7

Pno. 1 *ppp* *ff* unrelenting 5 5 6

Pno. 2 *ppp* *ff* unrelenting 5 6 5 5 7

59 E with piano 1

Vib. *mf* *Red.* 3 3 with sudden clarity

Mar. *pp* tr tr

Pno. 1 with vibraphone *mf* 3 3 with sudden clarity

Pno. 2 6 tr tr tr

63

Vib. *tr* *p* *f*

Mar. *(tr)* *f*

Pno. 1 *tr* *p* *ff*

Pno. 2 *tr* *f* *ff*

67

Vib. *p* like barely audible echoes *pp*

Mar. *pp* 3

Pno. 1 *pp* like barely audible echoes *p*

Pno. 2 *pp* like barely audible echoes *p* 3 6

12

F

72

repeat phrase

Vib. *mf* *rhythmical*

Mar. *mp* *rhythmical*

Pno. 1 *f* 6 6

gradually release pedal

Ped.

Pno. 2 *mf*

gradually release pedal

Ped.

74

Vib.

Mar.

Pno. 1 *mf*

6 6 6 6

Ped.

Pno. 2 *ff* *twisting*

77 (final time)

Vib.

Mar.

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

79

Vib. *mp* *reflective*

Mar.

Pno. 1 *p* *reflective*

Pno. 2 *p* *reflective*

80 81 82 83 84

[illegible]

89

Vib. *fading*  
*mf* *mp* *p* *pp*

Mar. *mp* *fading* *p* *pp* *ppp*

Pno. 1 *mp* *fading* *p* *pp* *ppp*

Pno. 2 *mp* *fading* *p* *pp* *ppp*

92

Vib. *almost imperceptible*  
*ppp* *pppp* hold resonance

Mar. *pppp*

Pno. 1 *pppp* hold resonance

Pno. 2 *pppp* hold resonance





# Strangers

for violin and piano

Kevin Leomo

2016

# Performance Notes

The score is notated at concert pitch

Duration approximately 7'20"

SP – sul ponticello

N – normal bow position

arrows indicate gradual change in playing method

# Strangers

for violin and piano

Kevin Leomo  
2016

Tranquil ♩ = 60

Violin

Tranquil ♩ = 60

Piano

*pp* *delicately* *mp*

*pp* *f* *pp* *f*

Red. *ppp* *p*

SP N

6

Vln.

Pno.

*mp* *p* *pp* *mp*

*pp* like an echo

*pp* *ppp* *p*

SP N

12

Vln.

Pno.

*p* *pp* *mp* *pp*

*pp* *ppp* *p*

*p*

SP -

A

17 *molto vib.* *N* *3* *SP*

Vln. *f* *fp* *mp* *pp*

Pno. *ppp* *f* *5* *ppp*

*pp*

20 *N*

Vln. *mp* *f*

Pno. *mp* *p* *mf*

*pp*

24

Vln. *mp* *p*

Pno. *p*

26

Vln.

Pno. *mf*

28 B

Vln. *p* *mf*

Pno. *p*

6 5 3

32 SP

Vln. *p* *pp*

Pno. *pp* like an echo

36 N

Vln. *mp*

Pno. *pp* *p*

*pp* *pp*

40

Vln. *p* *mp* *ff*

Pno. *f* *mp* *ff*

3 5 3

4

42

Vln. *f* *mp*

Pno. *p*

44

Vln. *p* *f*

Pno. *p* *pp* *mf*

47

Vln. *pp* *mp*

Pno. *pp* *mp* *p*

51

Vln. *p* *pp* *pp*

Pno. *pp* *p* *8va* *loco*

56

Vln.

Pno.

SP

5

loco

loco

60

Vln.

Pno.

C

N

mp

p

mp

p

pp

65

Vln.

Pno.

III

pp

mp

N

SP

p

mp

p

70

Vln.

Pno.

N

pp

mp

f

pp

pp

mp

f



6

73

D

Vln. *p* *pp* *mf*

Pno. *p* *pp*

78

E

Vln. *f* *mp* *pp*

Pno. *pp*

*loco*

83

Vln. *pp* *mp* *p*

Pno. *mp* *pp*

*5* *3* *5* *7*

87

Vln. *p*

Pno. *mf* *p*

*5* *3* *5* *7*

91

Vln. *mp*

Pno. 6 5 5

93

Vln. *mp*

Pno. 3 *mp* *pp*

97

Vln. *pp*

Pno. *mp* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *pp* *ppp*

102

Vln. *mp* *pp*

Pno. *pp* *mp*

105

Vln.

Pno.

*f*

*mp*

108

Vln.

Pno.

*p*

*mp*

**F**

SP → N

112 → SP

Vln.

Pno.

*pp*

*pp*

*mp*

*p*

SP

N

116

Vln.

Pno.

*pp*

*ppp*

*pp*

*ppp*

SP